

do Santo Ofício instrumentalizou-se, tornando-se um agente fulcral nestes conflitos. A participação deste em assuntos de ordem externa à Inquisição movimentou as redes clientelares existentes, incrementando as contendas. Refira-se, assim, a inexistente constância no processo de implementação e maturação do comissário da Inquisição goesa em Macau. Foi a premente e imprescindível negociação entre Goa e as congregações presentes na cidade que gerou os múltiplos e interpolados modelos de comissário e as filiações religiosas que o assumiram. A Cidade do Nome de Deus foi, assim, resultado deste escambo constante entre o “querer” e o “acontecer”, entre o ideal imposto pelo Tribunal de Goa e a atuação, laboriosa, do comissário do Santo Ofício em Macau.

The Jesuits in Ethiopia (1609-1641): Latin Letters in Translation

Translated by Jessica Wright and Leon Grek, edited by Wendy Laura Belcher, introduced by Leonard Cohen.
Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag/ Aethiopische Forschungen, 2017, Bd. 84, 272 p.,
ISSN 0170-3/3196 and ISBN 978-3-447-10879-9.

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The book *Jesuits in Ethiopia (1609-1641): Latin Letters in Translation*, published 2015, constitutes a major contribution to the studies of the Jesuit mission in Ethiopia. This book is the first translation into English of the Letters included in Latin classic *Rerum Aethiopicarum Scriptores Occidentales Inediti a Saeculo XVI ad XIX*, 1911-1913, vols. 11-13, by Camillo Beccari. This compilation by Camilo Beccari, that is formed of 15 volumes, is the most important compilation of primary European sources on Ethiopia between the 16th and the 19th centuries. The editor of *Jesuits in Ethiopia (1609-1641)*, Professor Wendy Laura Belcher, Associate Professor of African Literature at Princeton, is the author of two books on Ethiopia, respectively *Abyssinia's Samuel Johnson: Ethiopian Thought in the Making of an English Author* (Oxford University Press, 2012), and *The Life and Struggles of Our Mother Walatta Petros: A Seventeenth-Century African Biography of an Ethiopian Woman* (Princeton University Press, 2015). She is writing a third book on medieval Ethiopia with the title *The Black Queen of Sheba: the Global History of an African Idea*. Dr. Leonardo Cohen, lecturer at the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev, is a leading researcher of Jesuit mission in Ethiopia (among his extensive writings on Jesuit mission in Ethiopia, see, in particular, his book *The Missionary Strategies of the Jesuits in Ethiopia (1555-1632)*, also published by Harrassowitz, in its series *Aethiopistische Forschungen*, 2009). The documents selected are coeval to Jesuit Ethiopia mission in its heights. The eldest date shortly after the accession of Emperor Susenyos I in 1607, who would convert to Christianity in 1612. They conclude in 1641, with the interdiction of the Jesuits to enter the country issued 1641, this marking the end of early modern Jesuit mission in Ethiopia (see the chronology, p.X, and the preface

by Wendy Laura Belcher, p.XI). Indeed, the thirty documents in full or as excerpts provide an immense amount of information on Jesuit mission in Ethiopia seen within a broader context. In the preface, Belcher stresses the role given to noble Ethiopian women in the Letters (p.XII-XVI). As her (Belcher's) "aim in commissioning this translation was to provide better access to texts on remarkable early modern African women, who were intellectually and politically active in the history of their nations." (p.XII-XIII). The two brief preface's chapters of *Birracial Ethiopians* and *Note on Prejudices* (both in p.XVI) call the reader's attention to the dubious position of the Jesuits concerning slavery as well as prejudices. Leonard Cohen wrote a very extensive and informative introduction to the documents (p.1-30). The first chapter *A History of the Catholic Mission in Ethiopia (1557-1632)* traces the history of Catholic Mission in Ethiopia from its beginning in 1557 to the rescinding of the edict by Susenyus forcing Ethiopians to convert to Christianity 1632, and his death on the 17th September of the same year. In the two next chapters *Jesuit Texts about Ethiopia* (p.3-4) and *Latin and the Jesuits* (p.4-5) Cohen stresses the importance of Latin for the Jesuits. He illustrates his point, arguing that most letters were written either in Portuguese or in Latin (p.4). In the chapter *Exporting the Counter-Reformation* (p.5-7), Cohen mentions the use made by Jesuits of public theological debates, violence and translation into Ethiopian of European works as instruments of transposition of this historical movement to this African context. As in many other places, in Ethiopia, Jesuits followed a top down strategy in their missionary activity. According to Cohen, Soelä Krastos, advisor to Susenyus, "was, along with Emperor Susenyus, the cornerstone of local Catholicism in Ethiopia" (*The Conversion of Noblemen: The Case os Soelä Krastos and Susenyus*, p.7). As Welch, Cohen gives noblewomen a special role in this process. Quoting his introductory statements to the chapter *The Conversion of Noblewomen* "The Jesuits also took great measures to obtain the favour and the conversion of noblewomen. This was no easy task, since many of these women were actively hostile to Catholicism, but around the world, a main tactic of the Jesuits was engaging women in dialogue on spiritual matters, and the conversion of noblewomen was nothing new to them." (p.11); Cohen moreover integrates conversion of Ethiopian noblewomen to Christianity into a major subject of historiography on Early Modern Ethiopia, as exemplified by such authors as Gerard Geist, Verena Böll, Sevir Chernetsov, Leonardo Cohen, and Wendy Laura Belcher (p.11-12). The ascension of Fasiladas, son of Emperor Susenyus, to the throne, ended Jesuit collaboration with the Emperor, and marked thereby the defeat of Christianity in Ethiopia (p.15). Cohen collects the reasons for defeat of Christianity from an antagonistic letter to the Jesuits, attributed to the Augustinian friar Manoel de Assunção and dated 1640 (Letter 26). According to Assunção, Catholicism in Ethiopia failed largely because of the ownership of land by the Jesuits, their involvement with politics and the limitations of their enculturation policies (*The Reasons for the Defeat of Catholicism*, p.17-19). In the chapter *Was Mendes Responsible for the Defeat of Christianity?* Cohen inserted some aspects of rather hard-line policy by the Catholic Patriarch of Ethiopia Afonso Mendes within the new missionary strategy followed by the *Sacra Congregation de Propaganda Fide* (p.19-26). The defeat of Jesuit mission is also part of the rivalries among Catholic orders, as dealt with by the chapter *The Capuchins and the Mission's Project in Ethiopia* (p.26-27). Both in Europe, as beyond, including in Ethiopia, many Jesuits were martyrs of their faith, as approached by Cohen in

the chapter *Under the Crown of Martyrdom* (p.28-30). Certainly, this book is an invaluable mine of information for Jesuit mission in Ethiopia. However, its reading may be sometimes rendered difficult. The reader lacks a good conclusion to the introduction. The conclusion is general and doesn't enumerate the main aspects treated before in the different chapters. Either or both the preface and the introduction could have been more assertive concerning the reasons for the selection of these documents, in addition to stressing the importance of Beccari's collectanea for the historiography of early modern Ethiopia. Particularly illustrative of the latter aspect is the fact that Cohen refers the relevance of Beccari's compilation only at the end of second chapter (*Jesuit Texts about Ethiopia*, p.3-4). The introduction may have been built closer to the documents. It would have been essential to explain the leading role played by the Jesuits in Catholic mission to Ethiopia, to correctly argue for the defeat of the latter due to the banishment and lynching of the first. In spite of these few aspects that may be considered fragilities, the work *The Jesuits in Ethiopia (1609-1641) Latin Letters in Translation* is an essential work within the prolific historiography of Jesuit presence in Ethiopia. In addition to documents, the introduction, the chronology, brief but clear footnotes and the excellent *Glossary of People, Places, and Terms in the Latin Letters of the Jesuits* by Emily Dalton and Wendy Laura Belcher, p.193-258, constitute most valuable instruments to form a comprehensive picture of the subject of this book.